

PA HELPS JOHN TO RUN AWAY.

By a Business Man.

I had an experience when I was a boy. It was a favorite threat of mine that I'd run away. If I was sent on an errand I didn't like, I'd mutter that I was going to run away; if I was kept in the house for missing my lessons at school, I'd whimper that I was going to run away; if I got my ears boxed for mischief, I'd cry that I was going to run away. Then, maybe, I'd make a dash for my cap and my mother would send me up to the garret without my shoes till I got cooled off, or else she'd lock me up in the toolshed with an ax and a small mountain of logs to split into kindling. We lived in the country, you see.

But at last my father got tired of hearing the threat. I tell you he was a smart man, my father. No licking for him and no counter threats. He had a game of his own. He just waited until he got me committed beyond retreat.

I forgot what mischief it grew out of, or whether it was just my natural boy's resistance to something I was told to do. Whatever it was, I know I ended up the dispute with the flat-footed announcement, "I'm goin' to leave home an' look out for myself. I'm going now. So there!"

"Oh, very well, John," said my father, as grave as an owl. "I'm sorry; but if your mind's made up, it can't be helped. We may as well part friends. Come over and see mother," and with that he took me by the hand as kind and gentle as a patriarch in a picture in the Bible, and began walking me over toward the house. I forgot to mention that the fuss was in the barn.

Now you can imagine how my heart rose up in my throat in that short walk over to the house. I had been more or less consciously bluffing, and here I was, it seemed, up against the real thing.

About this time we reached the kitchen door, and the old man drew me in. I can see the picture right now before my eyes—my mother with her big, blue gingham apron, stirring apples with a wooden spoon in a big copper kettle on the shining stove. Ann Maria, the hired girl, was peeling the potatoes for the men's dinner. My baby brother was sitting in his swing chair near the door and making grabs at the black cat's tail as it rubbed to and fro against a chair-leg just out of his reach. Oh, it was so peaceful and homelike, and the pungent smell of those apples just went to my gizzard.

Then, says pa, as grave as an old judge, but just as kind and sweet as honey: "Ma," says he, "John has concluded it's best for him to leave home. He's going out into the world to make his fortune, and he's come over to tell you good-bye."

"Well, Ma," says my father, "I guess we'd best do something to give him a start in life. Just let Ann Maria stir the apples, and you go and make him up a little bundle. He'll want a clean shirt and a pair of socks or two and a couple of handkerchiefs—and bring him his good shoes. And say, Ma, you bring me down

a dollar bill out of the bureau drawer."

Ma started off as cheerful as could be, and my father turned to me where I stood, frozen with horror, and putting on the fine society air that he usually kept for the dominie and the doctor, he waved me to a chair, politely urging me as if I were already a stranger in the house, with "Sit down, John. Take the rocking chair and rest yourself. You'll need it. Maybe you'll have a long way to go today."

He slipped out of the room a few minutes, and then he came back with a loaf and the heel of Sabbath joint of beef and some butter, and he began cutting the bread and spreading the butter and slicing the beef and making nice, juicy sandwiches with great industry. I looked on with a sick sort of wonder, too crushed even to cry, when ma came hustling back, a choice selection from my wardrobe over her arm and my Testament in her hand. This was an awful stroke. It was so like the stories in the books.

"I'm making a few sandwiches for John," says my father, kind o' pathetic like. "He may need them, poor boy," and he heaved a sigh.

This tapped the springs of my soul. I gave a sob that must have sounded like a hiccup and tears began to stream down my face.

But my father was unrelenting. He tied the sandwiches up in a napkin and made a bundle of the clothes, with the Testament in the middle, and then he ambled up to me with the bundle in one hand and a nice, crisp dollar bill in the other, holding them out with:

"Well, here you are, son John. Maybe this'll give you a fair start in life, and as you must go, why, it's time to be starting now. It's getting on in the morning, and, no doubt, you've a long way to travel before night. So kiss your mother and"—

But I didn't wait to hear any more. I made a dash for my mother and fell on my knees before her to bury my face in her apron—I was only about eleven or twelve, you see—and with sobs and wails and floods of tears I begged her, "Don't send me away! Oh, don't let him send me away! I'll be good! I'll chop the wood and tend baby, and you'll never have no trouble with me any more. Only don't send me away from you and pa."

They had some trouble quieting me, and I guess there were almost as many tears on my mother's cheeks as on my own by the time the incident was ended.



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Ann Maria was sniveling over the stove, but my father held his ground, grave but kind. He inaugurated a long parley, in the course of which I promised over and over again that never more would I threaten to run away.

Well, neither did I. If the dangerous words ever came to the tip of my tongue a glance at my father's face, or my mother's, was enough to make me swallow them.—North American.

BRIGHT HOMES.

We try to make our homes bright. For this purpose we make use of artificial light. Modern ways of lighting homes add much to the cheerfulness of the place. Electric lights shining through ingenious designs in glass fill the house with a burst of glory. Unpretentious houses are lighted so as to look like a fairy's palace.

We brighten our homes with music, with pictures, with books, papers and magazines with company and festivities. We want the brightest music, the brightest pictures, the brightest literature and the brightest company in the home. It is natural to try to shut out the darkness and bring in the light.

There is something more radiant than the brightest electric light, the brightest music, the brightest books. The radiant Christian character will make the home brighter than anything else. If every member of the home were illuminated by the Spirit of our Lord, what beautiful homes we should see. This brightness will endure. A father whose soul is radiant with love and sympathy and goodness will leave a light in the home when he departs. That light will linger as long as the home shall continue to exist.

Let the prayers in the home be bright. Let the conversation be brightened, not only by literary and scientific illumination, but also by the light which is kindled from above. A truly bright home, bright with love, bright with peace, bright with happiness, is a type of that home beyond the skies which is filled with everlasting sunshine.

If God gives me work to do, I will thank Him that he has bestowed upon me a strong arm; if he gives me danger to brave, I will bless Him that He has not made me without courage; but I will go down on my knees and beseech Him to fit me for my task, if He tells me it is only to stand and wait.—Jean Ingelow.